"Tying Incumbents' Hands": The Effects of Election Monitoring on Electoral Outcomes

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Abstract

Electoral observation missions (EOM) are designed to promote improvements in democratic quality by overseeing elections, but how successful are they? We argue that EOM tie the hands of incumbents, who have to adjust their electoral misconduct strategies, thus opening up political competition and making it more likely that the opposition will do well. Moreover, we propose that monitoring effects are conditioned by regime type, expecting that EOM presence has a stronger impact on electoral competition in autocracies than in democracies. Using a dataset of 580 parliamentary and presidential elections in 108 countries between 1976 and 2009 we find support for our theoretical claims. EOM increase electoral competitiveness in dictatorships by reducing margins of victory for incumbents, but leave competition unaffected in democracies. Furthermore, our analysis indicates that, contrary to previous findings, EOM increase the probability of electoral turnover in dictatorships but have no effect on democracies.

Keywords: electoral monitoring, electoral manipulation, electoral competitiveness, political competition, political regimes

Introduction

In recent years, elections have spread across a variety of regimes around the world. Almost in parallel, international organizations have also made significant efforts to monitor elections, trying to ensure that standards of electoral quality are kept and promote democracy (OSCE 2010). A largely uncontested assumption made by international organizations is that Electoral Observation Missions (EOM) improve electoral procedures and increase the competitiveness of elections (EU 2016).[1]

But how successful EOM really are in improving the quality of elections? This paper argues that EOM can enhance electoral competition, by tying the hands of incumbents and limiting their ability to use electoral manipulation. However, this is crucially conditioned by the type of political regime in place; electoral observation missions can be more effective in improving electoral competition in dictatorships, where manipulation is widespread and there is fertile ground for their involvement.[2]

While there is an expanding literature on electoral manipulation (Ruiz-Rufino 2018), relatively little attention has been paid to understanding how monitoring affects electoral competition, and particularly how regime type conditions this relationship. This is surprising as monitoring is considered to have become a norm for some political regimes (Hyde 2011a) and misconduct is a relatively common occurrence especially in non-established democracies and dictatorships (Schedler 2002; Birch 2007; Alvarez et al. 2008; Çavdar 2008; Hyde and O'Mahony 2010; Mebane and Kalinin 2010; Donno and Roussias 2012; Simpser 2012, 2013; Flores and Nooruddin 2016). However, upon closer inspection, the literature has yet to provide a clear answer

[1] See https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/water-diplomacy/421/election-observation-missions-eueoms_en.

[2] We use the terms electoral manipulation and electoral misconduct interchangeably. Following Birch (2007), we understand electoral misconduct as "activities that lead to a violation of the 'level playing field' that is ideal of electoral processes" (p.1535).

about the impact of monitoring on electoral competitiveness, and surprisingly, the role of political regimes is residual and theoretically undeveloped.

In particular, work examining how EOM affect election quality (Kelley 2012), governance (Simpser and Donno 2012), electoral violence (Daxecker 2012, 2014), electoral boycotts (Beaulieu and Hyde 2009; Kelley 2011) or fiscal manipulation (Hyde and O'Mahony 2010) uses political regimes as a control variable but never examine its impact theoretically. Furthermore, experimental work has produced inconclusive results about the impact of monitoring on electoral competitiveness. While some studies suggest a positive effect of EOM on electoral competition (Hyde 2007; Enikolopov et al. 2013; Asunka et al. 2017), other work finds a negative one (Hyde 2010; Ichino and Schündeln 2012; Buzin et al. 2016). Moreover, the role of political regimes cannot be assessed in these studies as the related experiments are conducted in single countries.

Our paper adds to this open debate in two ways: first, by investigating how the presence of monitors affects electoral competition; and second, by attempting to clarify how political regimes mediate the relationship between EOM and competitiveness. We argue that having an election monitored restricts the ability of incumbents to engage in electoral misconduct by increasing the costs of manipulation and by creating the possibility of negative repercussions if their actions are unveiled. EOM can therefore condition incumbents' strategies and force them to adjust their manipulation tactics (Ichino and Schündeln 2012; Simpser and Donno 2012; Sjoberg 2014). This, in turn, opens up political space for opposition parties and increases the likelihood that they will perform better in elections. We thus expect that EOM presence should increase electoral competitiveness and improve the electoral showing of the opposition.

Second, we highlight the importance of regime types and reflect on the role they play with respect to the effectiveness of monitoring. While electoral misconduct is a phenomenon we

encounter across all regimes, its occurrence and extent is more pronounced in autocracies (Kelley and Kolev 2010). We argue that the presence of electoral observers should be more consequential in autocracies, where manipulation is more prevalent and thus the likelihood of improving the quality of elections should be higher. If EOM presence restricts the use of manipulation, then political competition should open up more in autocracies than in democracies, where elections are likely to be more competitive anyway. Additionally, EOM presence in autocracies can embolden opposition parties, which can intensify their campaign activities and become vocal against acts of manipulation, further improving electoral competitiveness. Therefore, we expect that the presence of international monitors should have a stronger impact in autocratic than in democratic regimes.

Our analysis indicates that the presence of monitors affects electoral competitiveness by reducing the margins of victory between incumbents and the opposition. The effect is robust and substantively important, yet it manifests itself only in non-democracies. Moreover, we find that the presence of EOM increases the likelihood of opposition victory in dictatorships, but has no effect in democracies. These novel findings constitute an important contribution to our understanding of electoral monitoring and its effectiveness. They suggest that EOM presence is most influential in regimes where political liberties are not entrenched and the quality of electoral competition is questionable. As such, election monitoring should not be perceived simply as a tool rulers use to increase legitimacy, but could provide, under certain conditions, also an important service in the promotion of democratization around the world.

The observable implications of our theory are tested using an original dataset containing information on 580 parliamentary and presidential elections in 108 countries between 1976 and 2009. Our empirical strategy takes into account an important selection issue, as the choice to invite an EOM could be related to the decision to use tools of manipulation during the election. This is a

problem that exists in most research analyzing the role of EOM in electoral competition (Beaulieu and Hyde 2009; Kelley 2011, 2012; Simpser and Donno 2012; Daxecker 2012, 2014) and could compromise the validity of the analysis. We address this issue using both an instrumental variables approach and matching in order to correct any potential bias in our estimations.

The rest of the article proceeds as follows. The next two sections discuss the tradeoffs countries face when deciding to invite missions and how monitoring can condition incumbents' misconduct strategies. Section 4 discusses political regimes and how their dynamics condition the effect EOM have on electoral competition. Section 5 presents our data, while sections 6 and 7 discuss our empirical findings and a series of robustness tests. We conclude summarizing our contribution and discussing some policy recommendations as well as extensions of our research.

Tradeoffs Associated with EOM

Incumbents, whether in young democracies or in contested authoritarian regimes, care about the legitimation of their regimes. International legitimacy is important as it conditions the supply of various forms of benefits for developing countries. International aid or membership in transnational organizations are often linked with various kinds of conditionalities (World Bank 2005). Protection of human rights, respect of civil liberties, or fairness of elections are common requirements for entering organizations such as the European Union or the Organization of American States. Respecting the rule of law is equally important for foreign investors who wish to undertake significant investments and worry about property rights (Biglaiser and Staats 2010).

One clear quality test for states comes in the form of international observation missions. EOM can offer a stamp of approval on regimes that hold elections if they issue a positive verdict regarding the quality of the elections. Several international organizations, like the EU, the OSCE,

the OAS, the Carter Center or ECOWAS, have set up dedicated agencies that deal specifically with observing elections. In fact, monitoring has become so widespread that it is considered an international norm (Hyde 2011a, 2011b) and regimes holding elections are expected to invite missions, otherwise they risk having their elections branded as manipulated.[3]

However, inviting an EOM is not an automatic decision for incumbents. One of the goals of missions is to ensure that elections are conducted in a free and fair fashion and often issue negative reports about the quality of elections. According to some calculations, around half of EOM reports indicate significant problems with the conduct of elections (Kelley 2012). Assuming that incumbents do not wish to be branded by the international community as cheaters, inviting an EOM is not a costless action. The decision is a difficult one as some incumbents have to consider the likelihood of receiving a negative verdict and the repercussions that may follow.

The costs of a negative EOM report are significant both internationally and domestically. Internationally, there may be sanctions, including the withholding of economic aid or the freezing of trade.[4] Domestically, opposition parties may use negative reports to appeal the results of elections and stir up protests, seeking political gain (Beaulieu and Hyde 2009; Hyde and Marinov 2014). For example, the 2004 Presidential elections in Ukraine were seriously questioned by international monitors and these fraud allegations spurred demonstrations that forced the government to repeat the elections which eventually ousted the incumbent.[5]

Consequences of Inviting an EOM

[3] Note that EOM have to be invited by the country holding elections and accept the invitation, for a mission to occur.
[4] See, for example, the sanctions imposed by the EU to Belarus following the 2006 Presidential elections (http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:134:0001:0011:EN:PDF).
[5] See the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report on the 2004 Presidential Elections in Ukraine (http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/ukraine/14674?download=true).

Electoral observation missions can be seen as information signaling tools. Hyde and Marinov (2014) argue that EOM provide reliable information about the quality of elections. Little (2012, 2015) claims that inviting electoral monitors reduces the amount of manipulation incumbents can use and makes it more likely that citizens will trust the electoral outcome. Relatedly, Simpser (2013) links the use of manipulation with the information elections reveal about the relative strength of the incumbent and challengers. We focus however, on the impact monitoring missions have on electoral competitiveness.

To analyze the effects of monitoring we first need to understand under what conditions a government would invite an electoral observation mission; to do that we make three assumptions. First, we assume that incumbents seek reelection. Second, we assume that incumbents who invite an EOM seek a positive endorsement from the monitoring organization. No incumbent, *ceteris paribus*, would prefer a negative to a positive EOM verdict, although some incumbents may be more averse than others to a lack of an endorsement.[6] Third, incumbents have the capacity to employ electoral misconduct in their quest for re-election. The propensity to use such tools will vary based on the ruler's "type"; while some would not consider employing manipulation, others would be more than ready to cheat electorally. Finally, it is important to note that our analysis focuses on regimes holding elections where political competition is either incipient or not well-established. This excludes long-lasting democracies where elections are typically of high quality.[7]

[6] We can think of incumbents as aligned along a continuum of exposure to pressure, based on their international linkage (Levitsky and Way 2010); some will be less sensitive than others to EOM reports. Moreover, assuming that not all rulers care equally about negative reports is consistent with the fact that some engage in public acts of manipulation (Simpser 2013).

[7] The typically high quality of elections in established democracies does not necessarily imply that EOM missions are not invited. For example, OSCE members are expected to receive an OSCE mission. For established democracies, these missions are focused more on issues such as party financing, enfranchisement or the use of new technologies than on actually deploying large number of observers to monitor the key stages of the election (see https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/deciding-where-to-observe).

These assumptions combined with the trade-offs discussed above provide a framework that can help us understand when EOM are invited: while a positive mission report can increase legitimacy, a negative one involves significant pitfalls, like economic sanctions and internal instability (Daxecker 2012; Daxecker and Schneider 2014). This is especially pertinent for rulers considering the use of misconduct. Some may choose not to take that risk, and do not invite international observers.[8] For those leaders, the electoral outcome is paramount and using misconduct to secure victory outweighs any EOM related benefits. However, the decision not to invite an EOM is costly as it can be perceived as equivalent to committing electoral manipulation and may erode the regime´s legitimacy (Hyde 2011a, 2011b).

Hence, there is significant pressure to invite EOM, regardless of the decision to cheat. When missions are invited to monitor elections, three scenarios unfold. First, some rulers may decide to avoid electoral fraud completely. Second, some may be determined to cheat but EOM presence forces them to limit the extent of electoral misconduct. Finally, there may be rulers who cheat regardless of EOM presence but will try to conceal it in an attempt to minimize the probability of receiving a negative election report. These scenarios point to different mechanisms that can help us understand how EOM presence can impact electoral competition.

The most drastic effect EOM presence may have is to induce the abandonment of electoral misconduct. In the absence of manipulation during the pre-electoral period, opposition parties can promote their platforms unobstructed and conduct a more effective campaign in a harassment-free environment Also, the lack of election-day manipulation would produce results that accurately

[8] This suggests that rulers not considering the use of fraud should always invite EOM, as they would only stand to gain from their presence in terms of legitimacy. It also forces us to think about the distinct effects regimes have with respect to inviting missions; this is discussed in the next section. However, we should be careful not to assume that all incumbents in democracies are "clean" and those in dictatorships "cheat". There is important variation in incumbent types within each regime, as well as to their decision to employ manipulation; there are plenty of rulers in democracies that use misconduct, while we also find autocracies where elections are clean (Donno and Roussias 2012).

reflect voters' preferences. Opposition parties would benefit from the absence of manipulation, and this should be manifested by an improved electoral outcome.

A second, and more realistic scenario, is that EOM presence will reduce, but not eradicate, the amount of misconduct. Limiting the use of misconduct should facilitate the electoral chances of opposition parties by, *inter alia*, allowing them to run relatively unobstructed campaigns. Of course, the impact of the effect depends on the type and extent of manipulation that incumbents use. One could assume that incumbents would minimize infractions more likely to be noted, like ballot stuffing or faulty counting, and utilize subtler tools such as biasing the media environment (Hyde 2008). Another possibility is that rulers change the timing of manipulation, focusing on pre-electoral activities, such as biasing the electoral system, tampering with voter and party registration or with campaign finance rules (Frank and Martinez i Coma 2017). Limiting the use of blatant tools of misconduct should benefit the opposition; yet, research has exhibited that subtler tactics, like pre-election misconduct, can be a potent tool for incumbents (Donno and Roussias 2012).

A third scenario is that rulers, instead of limiting, attempt to conceal the use of electoral misconduct trying to eschew EOM condemnation (Daxecker and Schneider 2014). Covering up misconduct is a costly and time-consuming expedition, using valuable resources that could be otherwise employed elsewhere (Kelley 2012). For example, incumbents may divert manipulation to unmonitored regions to avoid getting caught, or rely on less effective tools than the ones they would have liked to use (Ichino and Schündeln 2012; Asunka et al. 2017). Overall, the attempt to conceal misconduct should facilitate a better electoral performance for the opposition by increasing the cost of misconduct and reducing its effectiveness.[9]

[9] It is important to note that EOM presence can have some negative consequences, while at the same time improving electoral competitiveness. One deleterious effect is that displacement, concealment or alteration of the type of misconduct used, in the attempt to avoid negative reports, will hinder the ability of observers to detect fraud. Moreover,

EOM and Regime Dynamics

These scenarios illustrate that, in the presence of international monitors, the opposition should perform better electorally regardless of the behavior of the incumbent. Hence, our expectation is that inviting an EOM should open up political competition. The electoral fortunes of the opposition are, however, related to the political regime under which elections occur. Surprisingly, political regimes are hardly considered in the literature analyzing the relationship of EOM with electoral competition. Most of the existing work on this question either holds political regimes constant (Hyde 2007, 2010; Ichino and Schündeln 2012; Enikolopov et al. 2013; Buzin et al. 2016; Asunka et al. 2017), uses them as a control variable or as a determinant of case selection (Beaulieu and Hyde 2009; Hyde and O'Mahony 2010; Kelley 2011, 2012; Daxecker 2012, 2014; Simpser and Donno 2012). Thus, we lack a proper understanding of how political regimes condition the way EOM affect electoral competition.

As Przeworski illustrates, voting in democracies can be understood as "flexing muscles" (Przeworski 1999). This is so because in democratic regimes both government and opposition parties typically have access to significant economic and human resources that can be used in the presence of electoral manipulation. This indicates that incumbents intending to cheat in democracies assume a greater level of risk if fraud is detected. Empirical evidence corroborating this view shows that democracies, while not immune from the use of manipulation, are less likely to employ it in comparison to dictatorships (Kelley and Kolev 2010). The relatively limited use and extent of electoral fraud in democracies implies that the presence of EOM in those regimes would probably result in only marginal improvements in electoral quality. It also suggests that

in some instances, adjustments in manipulation tactics may actually lead to the adoption of more "effective" tools, such as the use of pre-election misconduct (Donno and Roussias 2012).

democracies should be more likely to extend invitations to EOM, as incumbents not engaging in fraud would not be worried about the possibility of a negative report.

Furthermore, in democracies, opposition parties are able to oversee the electoral process (even in the absence of EOM) and denounce misconduct without significant restrictions.[10] Among other things, they could mobilize their supporters in demonstrations, or use media access to publicize fraud. Regardless of the strategy used by the opposition, the cost of denouncing manipulation in democracies should be smaller than in non-democracies making it easier for the opposition to publicly condemn it. The capacity of the opposition to mobilize resources in democracies may act as a deterrent mechanism for incumbents tempted to cheat (Lehoucq 2002; Norris 2014; Norris et al. 2014).

Things are different in autocracies. The presence of EOM in authoritarian regimes should alter the dynamics of electoral competition as monitoring would be likely to cause significant reductions in the extent of misconduct. The deployment of observers would condition the strategies of incumbents wishing to rig elections. Relatedly, the presence of international monitors in autocracies can embolden the opposition and indirectly help it intensify its campaign activities, which would also improve its electoral chances and increase electoral competitiveness.

Moreover, public condemnation of electoral manipulation is not easy in authoritarian regimes, where opposition forces are, on average, weaker than in democracies, and face more repression (Bhasin and Gandhi 2013). Elections in authoritarian regimes tend to be tightly controlled by the state apparatus (Simpser 2013) and any loss of control over the electoral process – because of the presence of an EOM, for example – could be exploited by the opposition (Magaloni 2006; Lust-Okar 2009; Gandhi 2010). The presence of EOM in authoritarian regimes

[10] This should be facilitated by the presence of independent electoral management bodies (Frank and Martinez i Coma 2017), even though citizens in established democracies are not always trusting of them (Birch 2008).

could therefore impact the competitiveness of elections in an additional way, as it may encourage a stronger stance by opposition parties against the use of manipulation.

Given the different ways by which EOM may alter the electoral dynamics across regimes, we expect the presence of international monitors to have a greater effect on electoral competitiveness in authoritarian than in democratic regimes. This differential effect could be channeled by the mechanisms proposed above; either by the higher likelihood to reduce manipulation in non-democracies, or by making it more likely that opposition forces would become more active during campaigns and vocal against the use of manipulation. The following hypotheses summarize our theoretical expectations:

H1: *EOM presence should improve electoral competitiveness.*

H2: *EOM presence in authoritarian regimes should have a stronger positive effect on electoral competitiveness than in democratic ones.*

Data and Variables

To test our expectations, we compiled a dataset combining information on EOM and electoral outcomes. Monitoring data does not only refer to whether a country was monitored, but also to the level of democraticness of the organizations conducting the monitoring.[11] We also collected electoral data coding incumbent and opposition parties' performance.[12] We included all countries holding multiparty elections that are not established democracies.[13] We thus focus our

[11] We discuss this in detail below, when presenting the variable *constraints*.
[12] Electoral information was collected through a variety of sources, including official electoral commission results, as well as data handbooks (Nohlen 1993, 2005; Nohlen et al. 1999; Nohlen et al. 2001; Nohlen and Stöver 2010).
[13] We exclude established democracies as they regularly hold elections of high quality and electoral misconduct is not considered a potential tool for incumbents. Established democracies are operationalized as those that have been coded democratic for more than 25 consecutive years, following the regime type classification by Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland (2010). We relax this rule for countries where significant allegations of fraud exist and monitors have issued negative reports about the quality of elections. This rule affects the Dominican Republic and Venezuela, which are included in the analysis. Rerunning the analysis excluding these two countries leaves results unaffected.

attention on new democracies, as well as on dictatorships holding multiparty elections. The resulting dataset includes results from 580 parliamentary and presidential elections occurring in 108 countries between 1976 and 2009. The unit of analysis is election year; we look at legislative elections for parliamentary systems and executive ones for presidential systems. For semi-presidential systems we examine both legislative and executive elections when they are not concurrent; when they occur concurrently we only use parliamentary elections.[14]

We focus our attention on the electoral performance of the incumbent and the largest opposition party. In most cases it is straightforward identifying incumbent parties; the main exception is parliamentary systems with a coalition government; in those cases, we code as the incumbent the party of the Prime Minister at the time of the election. Opposition parties are identified case by case and exclude those aligned with the incumbent or satellite ones. For founding elections after a transition to democracy, cases are included only in instances when a candidate/party clearly linked with the outgoing regime runs.[15]

To test our theoretical arguments we use two different dependent variables. First, we use a proxy for electoral competitiveness that we call *vote margin*. This variable measures the margin of victory for the incumbent; higher margins indicate less competitive elections. The variable is calculated by subtracting the vote share of the biggest opposition party from that obtained by the incumbent; the variable is positive if the opposition loses and negative when the opposition wins. When presidential elections have two rounds, *vote margin* reflects the electoral results of the first round. The variable has a mean value of 15.6%.[16]

[14] For robustness purposes, we also conducted the analysis using presidential elections for concurrent semi-presidential systems; results remain the same.

[15] For example, in the 1999 Niger elections, following a military dictatorship, no candidates were linked to the previous regime; the election is not coded as no incumbent can be identified. In contrast, in the Central African Republic, following his own 2003 coup, ruler Francois Bozize competed in the 2005 presidential race; this instance is coded as an incumbent can be identified.

[16] Table A1 in the Appendix contains the relevant descriptive information of the variables used in our analysis.

Our second dependent variable, *opposition victory*, codes instances where an opposition party has deposed the incumbent following an election. The variable takes the value one for presidential elections when an opposition candidate wins the presidency, either in the first or the second round. For legislative elections, opposition victories are coded whenever the incumbent party is unable to form a government, either alone or as part of a coalition. This almost always coincides with instances where an opposition party won the largest share of seats in Parliament.[17]

Our main independent variable is a dichotomous one, *EOM*, indicating whether an international electoral observation mission was present during a particular election. The data was compiled through a combination of EOM reports, the NELDA dataset (Hyde and Marinov 2012) and the Kelley and Kolev (2010) dataset.[18]

Our second independent variable, *democracy*, is also binary and indicates whether a country is a democracy or an autocracy;[19] this variable is constructed using the autocratic regimes

[17] Rare cases where the incumbent won the largest seat share but was unable to form a government are coded as opposition victories, as they signify inability to hold on to power. Such an example is the 2002 Hungarian election where the opposition parties MSZP and the Alliance of Free Democrats formed a coalition government despite the fact that Fidesz (the PM's party) remained the largest party in Parliament (Benoit and Schiemann 2001).

[18] We use the data collected by Kelley and Kolev's (2010) to identify EOM that took place in the period 1976-2004. Kelley and Kolev´s data provides detailed information for all EOM during that period based on the monitoring reports generated by the organizing institutions; the variable is, hence, well measured. From 2004 onwards, we expanded the list of monitored countries using the following criteria. First, we looked at NELDA (Hyde and Marinov 2012) to check whether a particular election was reported as monitored (variables NELDA45 and NELDA46). Second, we looked for evidence confirming the existence of that EOM using the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network (http://aceproject.org/); this was necessary as we found some discrepancies between the data provided by NELDA and the actual existence of monitors after 2004. Accordingly, we classified elections via the following procedure: a) when NELDA45 indicated that an election was monitored and we found evidence of the existence of that mission - for example a provisional or final monitoring report we classified the election as monitored; b) all countries coded by NELDA as not monitored were cross-referenced with the ACE dataset and no discrepancies were found. These cases were classified as not-monitored; c) finally we did not code an election as monitored if NELDA indicated that an EOM had been present but we were unable to find any evidence supporting that claim. For example, NELDA45 and NELDA46 indicate the existence of non-Western Monitors in the 2009 Presidential Elections in Algeria. However, we did not find any election report from either major Western or non-Western IGOs and INGOs on that particular election (see also http://carnegie-mec.org/2009/04/13/lessons-from-algeria-s-2009-presidential-election).

[19] While there is no consensus in the literature about how to measure democracy (Munck and Verkuilen 2002; Coppedge et al. 2015), a concern could be that a dichotomous measure may be too blunt of an instrument for distinguishing regimes, particularly since our cases are countries holding multiparty elections and may fall somewhere in-between the extremes of a democracy/autocracy continuum. To address these concerns we conducted several tests, using the Polity IV (Marshall and Jaggers 2002) measure. Tables S1 to S18 in the Online Supplementary material repeat the main estimations of our analysis using various thresholds of this variable and results hold.

dataset (Geddes et al. 2014).[20] We expect that on average democracies will have smaller margins of victory as they typically have higher quality elections. Moreover, following our theoretical argument, we anticipate that regime type conditions both the quality of elections and the ability of monitors to observe them; we thus interact *democracy* with *EOM* to capture that effect. We expect that the presence of monitors in dictatorships should have a more pronounced positive effect on electoral competitiveness, since dictators are more likely to use manipulation tactics.

We also include several control variables related to the electoral setting; *Election type* indicates whether the election is parliamentary or presidential; *First election* is a dummy variable capturing the extraordinary nature of the first multiparty elections. We also include *GDP per capita* (logged) as measured by the World Bank; as the level of economic development is associated with several political phenomena we believe that it is important to examine if it affects the level of electoral competitiveness. Finally, the margin of victory in the previous election is included to capture the effect that the level of electoral competitiveness in the past may have.[21]

Monitoring and Electoral Performance of the Opposition

The main model that we use to evaluate our expectations is the following:

$$Vote\ Margin_{c,t} = \beta_0 + \delta_1 EOM_{c,t} + \delta_2 Democracy_{c,t} + \beta_1 Interaction_{c,t} + \theta Controls_{c,t} + \vartheta_c$$

Where *Vote Margin* refers to margin of victory; *EOM* indicates whether a country is monitored; *Democracy* refers to political regime and *Interaction* captures the combined effect of

[20] We use the Geddes, Wright and Frantz (2014) coding of autocracies as our main regime type variable, and the Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland (2010) coding for robustness purposes. The reason that we do not use the Cheibub et al measure as our primary variable is because of its "alternation rule", whereby regimes that did experience alternation are retroactively coded as democratic (up to the point where elections were introduced or new electoral rules was adopted). This retroactive coding may create issues with our ability to properly estimate the differential effects of regimes on the competitiveness of elections. Results hold when running the analysis using the Cheibub et al coding.

[21] Our models also included district magnitude to capture the effect of the electoral system (Cox 1997). District magnitude is, however, never significant and omitting the variable leaves results unaffected. For the sake of parsimony, we decided to exclude district magnitude from the analysis presented. Results are available upon request.

EOM and *Democracy*. The parameter θ refers to a vector of control variables and ϑ_c captures country fixed effects. All observations in our dataset refer to country *c* in election-year *t*. The parameters of interest are δ_1, δ_2 and β_1 which capture the combined effect of our main independent variables (Brambor et al. 2006). To estimate the parameters, we used a series of OLS models[22] which are summarized in Table 1.[23]

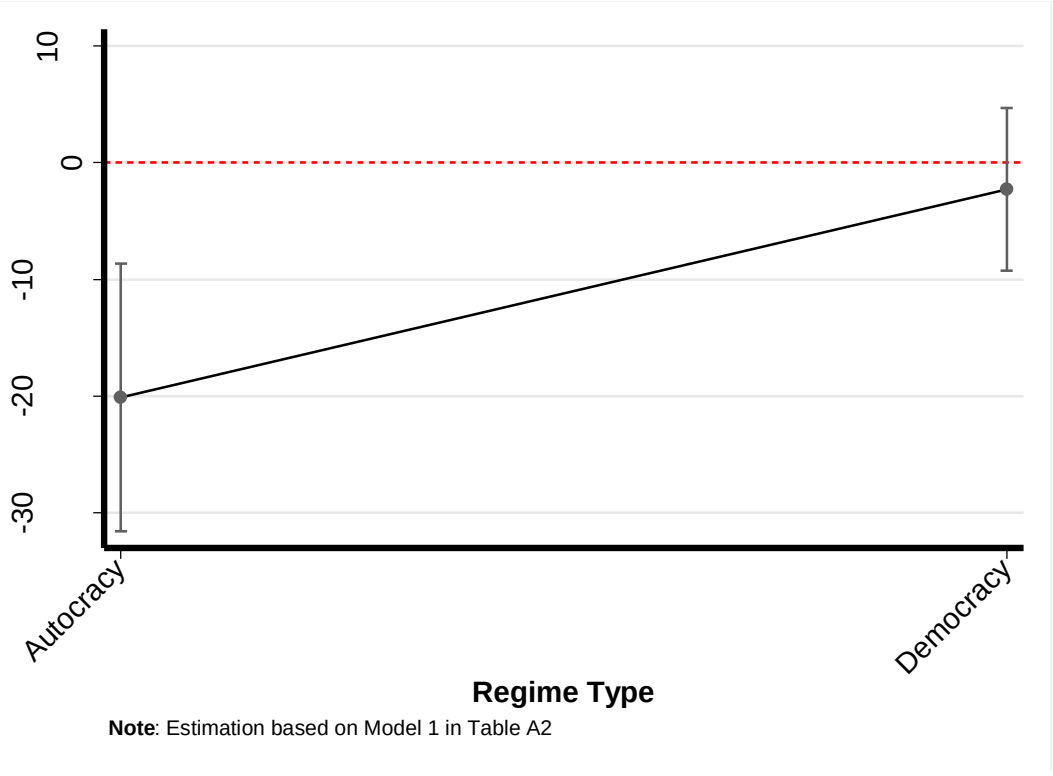
Table 1 – OLS results (summary)

VARIABLES	(1) Pooled Vote Margin	(2) Democracy Vote Margin	(3) Autocracy Vote Margin	(4) Pooled Opposition Victory	(5) Democracy Opposition Victory	(6) Autocracy Opposition Victory
EOM	-20.12***	-3.66	-22.11***	0.14**	0.15*	0.13*
	(5.850)	(3.598)	(6.536)	(0.065)	(0.077)	(0.075)
Democracy	-24.38***			0.30***		
	(7.877)			(0.103)		
Interaction	17.83**			-0.02		
	(7.452)			(0.090)		
Observations	412	262	150	425	270	155
R-squared	0.080	0.057	0.181	0.067	0.067	0.086
Controls	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
# Countries	104	69	58	105	70	59
FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Consistent with our expectations, EOM presence improves electoral competitiveness by reducing margins of victory (model 1). However, as hypothesized, this effect varies by regime type. Figure 1 shows the effect of monitors on vote margins once political regime is considered. As expected, EOM have a much stronger (and statistically significant) effect on electoral competition in autocracies, substantively reducing the margin of victory for incumbents. However, margins of victory in democracies are unaffected by the presence of monitors. As suggested above, this could be the consequence of fraud being less likely to occur in democracies.[24]

[22] Table A2 in the Appendix presents the full results of the models shown in Table 1.
[23] In all tables robust standard errors are in parentheses and *** indicate p<0.01, ** p<0.05 and * p<0.1.
[24] Our data supports this observation. Combining the DIEM dataset (Kelley and Kolev 2010) with our data shows that the quality of elections was acceptable in about 70% of monitored democracies, compared to only 50% of autocracies.

Figure 1 – EOM effect on Vote Margin (OLS estimates with 95% CI).



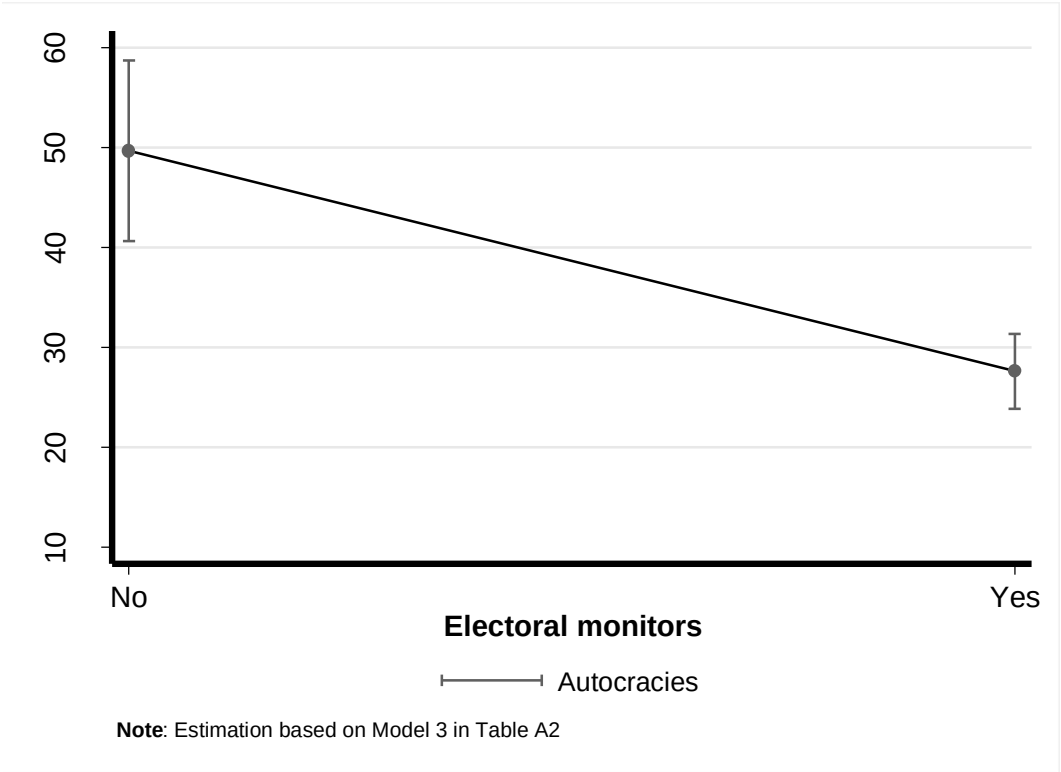
Note: Estimation based on Model 1 in Table A2

In the case of autocracies, EOM reduce margins of victory by 20% approximately. To visualize the effect of EOM in autocracies, Figure 2 estimates the predicted value of margins of victory depending on being monitored or not. As the graph shows, in the absence of monitors, the difference between the incumbent´s and the opposition´s vote-share is about 50%. However, when monitors are assessing the electoral process, this decreases to almost 28%.

While the magnitude of the effect is impressive, the fact that on average incumbents enjoy high margins of victory, even in the presence of monitors, raises questions about the impact EOM have on electoral turnover. As the literature has shown, some autocrats may open up political competition strategically, in order to survive in power (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007, 2006; Magaloni 2008). The case of Togo illustrates this well. Togo held presidential elections in 1993 where the ruling party *Rally of the Togolese People (RTP)* obtained 96.5% of the vote (elections were monitored, as were subsequent ones). Post-1993 *RTP* saw its electoral support decrease

significantly, falling even below 60% at times. Simultaneously, the opposition party *Union of Forces for Change* (UFC) enjoyed strong electoral results, reaching 38% in 2005. Nonetheless, *RTP* remained in power throughout the period. This shows that while monitoring may open-up competition, it does not necessarily mean that incumbents will be deposed, casting doubt on the impact of EOM in promoting democracy.

Figure 2 – Vote Margin in autocracies (OLS estimates with 95% CI).



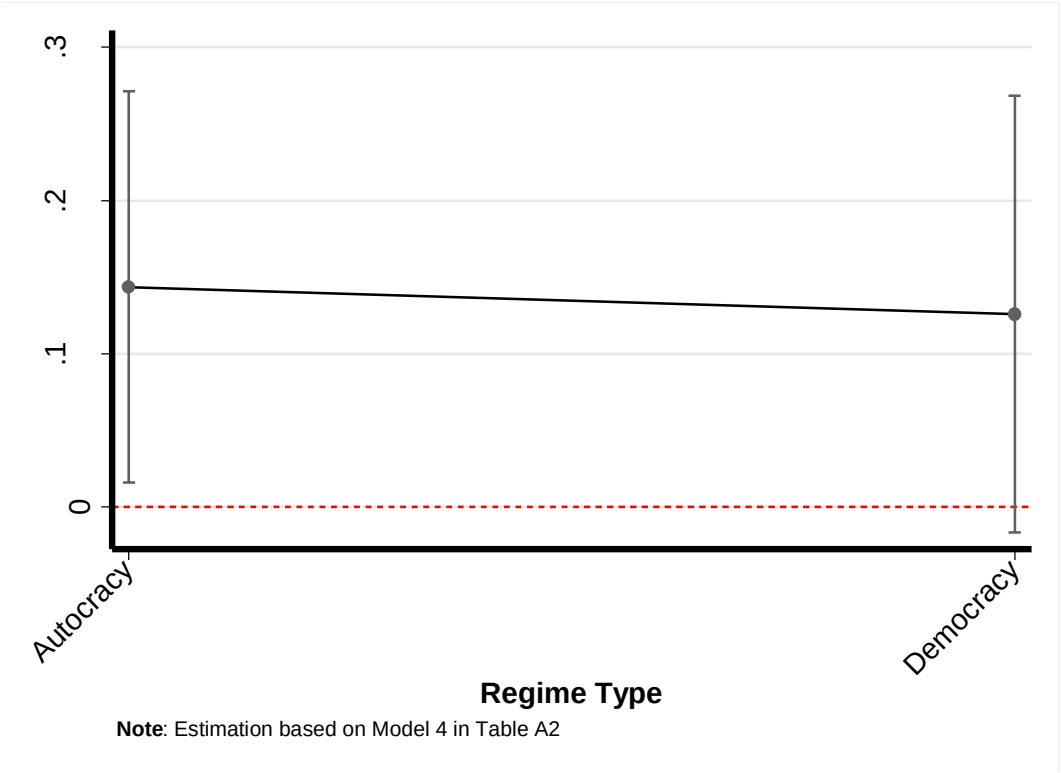
Note: Estimation based on Model 3 in Table A2

To test the effect of EOM on electoral turnover, we move on to the analysis of our second dependent variable, o*pposition victory* (Table 1). Figure 3 depicts the effect of EOM presence on electoral turnover across regimes; as expected, EOM have a significant impact only in autocracies.[25] Opposition victories in autocracies increase by about 14 percent when monitored; in

[25] To ease comparability of results across different models, we use a Linear Probability Model (LPM). The results hold if we use logit instead.

contrast, EOM presence does not affect significantly the rate of turnover in democracies. These findings are consistent with our argument that regime type conditions EOM effects, and offer a novel insight about the impact of monitoring: the presence of electoral observers does improve electoral competitiveness only in autocracies.

Figure 3 – EOM effect on Opposition Victory (OLS estimates with 95% CI).



Note: Estimation based on Model 4 in Table A2

Robustness tests

Selection Issues

A potential source of bias in our analysis comes from an important selection issue. Estimating the effect of EOM presence is problematic, as rulers considering the use of manipulation would be reluctant to invite EOM. Incumbents are aware that monitors will scrutinize their actions and, therefore, attempts to rig the elections will be hindered. Rulers considering an EOM invitation will thus make that decision in conjunction with their attempt to commit fraud.

Moreover, the decision to manipulate elections is related to the anticipated strength of the opposition. Stronger opposition parties should increase the probability of the use of manipulation, as incumbents seek reelection; this should also affect the likelihood that an incumbent will invite an EOM. Rulers facing weaker opposition should be more willing to invite EOM, while those unsure about the outcome of the elections should be more reluctant to do so; for them, the presence of international monitors would limit the ability to manipulate the election, while increasing the risk of losing power and of receiving a negative report. This creates issues with estimating the true effect of the presence of monitors. If the decision to invite monitors is related with the anticipated electoral outcome, then any estimates we would get from an empirical analysis using the presence of EOM as an independent variable would be biased (Angrist and Pischke 2008). We use two different approaches to deal with this issue: instrumental variables (IV) and matching.

To employ IV, we need to find a suitable instrument for EOM presence so that the effect of monitoring on electoral competition can be properly identified. To this purpose, we use two alternative instruments. First, we use a variable that captures the emergence of EOM as an international norm. Hyde (2011a, 2011b) argues that the increase in the number of new democracies after the collapse of communism increased the incentives of true democrats to invite monitors. This became so pervasive that it transformed into a norm; incumbents are expected to invite monitors, as doing otherwise is almost equivalent to admitting manipulation.

We believe that the collapse of the communist bloc is a valid instrument as it can satisfy the exclusion criterion. Our variable *Post-1989* can be used to predict the presence of monitors, as it coincides with the creation of the norm of monitoring, but at the same time cannot be directly linked with our dependent variables. We believe that the collapse of communism does not systematically predict the margin by which incumbents win elections, or whether a turnover would

occur. After 1989 there was great variation in regime types and electoral quality[26] which implies that, beyond its hypothesized link with monitoring, the collapse of the communist bloc cannot be directly associated with our dependent variables, and thus should be a valid instrument.[27]

Our second instrument is similar to the one used by Simpser and Donno to estimate the effect of monitoring on governance (2012). We use the regional level of monitoring in the two years preceding an election to instrument for EOM presence.[28] The identification strategy is based on the idea that as countries start inviting EOM they are likely to create pressure among neighboring ones to do the same. Moreover, beyond this contagion mechanism, regional variation in organizational capacity is likely to influence the propensity to invite monitors across the region. Furthermore, as Simpser and Donno (2012) argue, the rate of monitoring in a region depends on the number of countries holding elections; this can change drastically if exogenous shocks, like the collapse of the Soviet Union, are observed. Monitoring organizations may take some time to catch up with the increased demand for monitoring (ODIHR 2005), which is consistent with the idea that regional rates of monitoring can be a good predictor for the likelihood to invite an EOM. We also believe that the regional rate of monitoring satisfies the exclusion restriction. While the

[26] For example, looking at Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Republics one can observe a vast array of regimes emerging post-1989. While some countries held relatively high quality elections (such as Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland), others found it more difficult to do so, often staging fraudulent elections in severely restricted political environments (such as Azerbaijan, Belarus, or Kyrgyzstan). This suggests that the often used argument of increased electoral competitiveness and democraticness post-1989 does not hold across the board, and as such it is unlikely that the proposed instrument systematically predicts our dependent variables.

[27] To examine the validity of *post-1989* as an instrument we tried to address several potential concerns. First, some worry that after 1989 elections became more competitive across regimes; we compared the average margins of victory pre and post-1989 and found no such evidence. In democracies vote margins increase post-1989, while they decrease marginally in dictatorships. Second, some argue that we are more likely to observe democracies post-1989, and as such competitiveness of elections should increase. Comparing rates of democracies and dictatorships in both periods, using three different regime measures (Cheibub et al 2010, Geddes et al 2011, POLITY IV), we find no such evidence.

[28] Regional rate of monitoring is calculated as the percentage of elections that were monitored in the region in the previous two years. We categorize countries in six regions: Central Asia, Asia, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Africa, and South America.

rate of regional monitoring is likely to create pressure for incumbents to invite EOM, it does not appear plausible that it affects the competitiveness of elections by any other channel.[29]

Table 2 – 2SLS analysis using Vote Margin as dependent variable

VARIABLES	(1) Pooled	(2) Autocracies	(3) Democracies	(4) Pooled	(5) Autocracies	(6) Democracies
EOM	-61.98***	-63.05***	-1.581	-65.46***	-67.08***	-2.989
	(15.643)	(14.542)	(12.00)	(14.691)	(14.456)	(28.30)
Democracy	-55.83***			-52.77**		
	(17.685)			(22.292)		
Interaction	60.01***			55.22**		
	(19.856)			(27.636)		
Observations	412	150	262	412	150	262
R-squared	0.606	0.654	0.438	0.590	0.627	0.439
Instrument	Post 1989	Post 1989	Post 1989	EOM 2Y	EOM 2Y	EOM 2Y
FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Using these two instruments we re-estimate our analysis and Table 2 presents the main coefficients in the models estimated.[30] To ensure the orthogonality of the residuals, each stage is estimated with OLS, which provides a linear approximation of the probability density function of the outcome variable (Angrist and Pischke 2008). In our estimations, the two interactive models (Models 1 and 4) show that the instruments are valid, however, they appear to be weak. This problem is overcome when we break down the estimation by regime type. Models 2 and 5 show estimations for autocracies and both instruments produce a significant coefficient in the first stage

[29] One could expect that regional levels of monitoring are partly determined by electoral competitiveness in the region. To test this hypothesis, we regressed regional rates of monitoring on our dependent variable; we do not find that competitiveness predicts monitoring rates and interpret this as evidence consistent with the exclusion restriction.
[30] Table A3 in the Appendix presents the 2SLS estimates for margins of victory using separately post-1989 and 2-year EOM regional rates as instruments. We also run a model where we used both instruments together but the model did not improve and 2-year regional EOM was not statistically significant in the first stage.

regression, and improve their strength.[31] Models 3 and 6 show estimations for democracies, where EOM presence does not have an effect on margins of victory.[32]

We repeat the analysis using opposition victory as the dependent variable and Table 3 shows the 2SLS results of our estimations.[33] Similar to what we observed in our previous analysis, after using the full sample (models 1 and 4) both instruments are valid but weak; however, the problem disappears when we break down the analysis by regime type. The analysis reveals, again, that the presence of EOM increases significantly the likelihood of opposition victories in autocracies,[34] whereas in democracies electoral observation missions have no effect.[35]

Table 3 – 2SLS coefficients using Opposition Victory as dependent variable

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
VARIABLES	Pooled	Autocracies	Democracies	Pooled	Autocracies	Democracies
EOM	0.60***	0.54***	0.31	0.54**	0.56***	-0.269
	(0.177)	(0.185)	(0.303)	(0.223)	(0.187)	(0.773)
Democracy	0.58***			0.81*		
	(0.225)			(0.460)		
Interaction	-0.39			-0.73		
	(0.284)			(0.623)		
Observations	425	155	270	425	155	270
R-squared	0.364	0.410	0.319	0.340	0.402	0.258
Instrument	Post 1989	Post 1989	Post 1989	EOM 2Y	EOM 2Y	EOM 2Y
FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

[31] Post-1989 passes the weak instrument test (F-value=17.86, model 2), while the 2-years EOM instrument performs slightly worse (F-value=7.35, model 5). However, we used the Anderson-Rubin method (Finlay and Magnusson (2009) to estimate a valid confidence interval for weak instruments which confirms that the EOM coefficient in autocracies is statistically significant.

[32] The instruments in the democracy regressions are weak; the F value for post-1989 in model 3 is 6 and the F value for 2-years regional EOM in model 6 is 2. The Anderson-Rubin confidence interval also confirms that the coefficient of EOM in democracies is not statistically significant.

[33] Table A4 in the Appendix presents the 2SLS estimates for opposition victory using both post-1989 and 2-year EOM regional variations as instruments.

[34] In the autocratic subset regressions, post-1989 is a strong instrument (F-value=16, model 2), whereas the 2 years regional EOM instrument performs worse (F-value=7, model 5). However, the Anderson-Rubin confidence interval for weak instruments confirms that the EOM coefficient is statistically significant.

[35] Both instruments are weak in the democratic subset regressions. Applying the Anderson-Rubin method to estimate a valid confidence interval confirms that EOM are not statistically significant in these models.

A common problem with IV models consists in providing strong and sufficient justification for the exclusion restriction which, by definition, cannot be empirically tested (Angrist and Pischke 2008; Imbens 2014). The weakness of the instruments is also a source of concern as it may compromise both the size of the coefficient and statistical inference. In fact, finding a suitable instrument for EOM has been challenging in the existing literature. As Kelley (2011) indicates: "*Most traditional methods to correct for selection require a variable that can be used as an instrument—a variable that is correlated with the independent variable of interest but is not theorized to have any effect on the dependent variable. Such variables are rare and, in the given context, not available.*" (pp 1539-1540).

To overcome the potential issues associated with the difficulty of finding an appropriate instrument, we re-estimate our models using matching.[36] This quasi-experimental method is suggested as an alternative to IV by both Kelley (2011, 2012) and Daxecker (2012, 2014) in their work on monitoring. Our estimation uses a propensity score matching routine where the treatment model is estimated using a logit algorithm. Table 4 below shows the effect of monitoring on vote margins and opposition victory respectively. When using vote margin as a dependent variable, the direction and statistical significance of the matching estimators coincide with our previous findings. When the dependent variable is opposition victory, again the direction of the coefficients holds but monitoring is only significant in the pooled model. Overall, these alternative estimations accounting for selection issues confirm our main theoretical claims about the how political regimes condition the effectiveness of electoral competition as well as provide robustness to our empirical analysis.[37]

[36] We use propensity score matching as implemented by the STATA command *teffects psmatch*.
[37] These analyses are however limited in one sense. Our estimations clearly reveal that EOM have an effect on electoral competition at the national level in authoritarian regimes but our data does not allow us to identify cheating that could, for example, be happening at the sub-national level, and only exert its effects locally.

Table 4 – Matching with Vote Margin (VM) and Opposition Victory (OV) as dependent variables

VARIABLES	(1) Pooled	(2) Autocracies	(3) Democracies	(4) Pooled	(5) Autocracies	(6) Democracies
EOM	-9.775***	-21.923**	-0.845	0.112**	0.070	0.085
	(3.302)	(9.655)	(3.615)	(0.058)	(0.094)	(0.070)
Observations	412	150	262	425	155	270
Dep. Variable	VM	VM	VM	OV	OV	OV

Alternative explanations

Beyond the presence of monitors, the type of organizations that send observation missions is also important (Kelley 2012, Donno and Simpser 2012). Following the work by Pevehouse (2002), one can expect that IGOs dominated by non-democratic country-members would be more likely to overlook some forms of electoral misconduct or be more lenient in their reports. On top of this, inviting multiple missions of varying quality levels may be desirable for cheating incumbents, as contradictory verdicts from different EOM may soften the negative repercussions of a negative report (Daxecker and Schneider 2014). To account for the impact of the type of organization, and further check the robustness of our results, we created the variable *constraints*.

Constraints measures the percentage of democratic member-states for each IGO that monitored elections; the logic is that the level of democraticness of an organization would largely dictate the quality of monitoring and the leniency of reports. We expect that missions from highly democratic organizations, such as the EU, should enhance competitiveness, whereas missions from less democratic organizations, like the African Union, less so, as they will be more likely to turn a blind eye to instances of manipulation. The variable ranges from 0 to 1; higher values indicate a higher percentage of democratic member states. For example, *constraints* equals 1 for the European Union, while the African Union ranges from 0.086 in the 1980s to 0.225 in the 2000s. In the case of multiple IGOs monitoring an election, *constraints* takes the score of the most

democratic IGO. For INGOs sending EOM, we follow Donno and Simpser (2012, p. 507) in coding high quality ones as being fully democratic, while the rest are coded as non-democratic.[38]

Using this indicator as our new independent variable we re-estimate our models using both dependent variables (Table A5 in Appendix). As expected, the level of democraticness of an organization has an effect on the electoral environment; margins of victory decrease by around 27% in autocracies when monitored by fully democratic IGOs (statistically significant at the 99% level), while in democracies the effect is not significant. When looking at opposition victory results show that the effect of observing an alternation in power is greater in autocracies (0.19) than in democracies (0.14) when elections are monitored by a fully democratic IGO, although both coefficients fall slightly short of conventional statistical significance tests.[39]

Conclusions

In this article, we offer a novel interpretation of the effectiveness of international electoral monitoring on the quality of elections. We argue that in order to properly understand how EOM operate, the dynamics of different political regimes must be considered. In particular, we argue that EOM limit the ability of incumbents to use electoral misconduct in the pursuit of electoral victory. We offer several mechanisms by which it may operate; through eliminating, reducing, changing the type, or by forcing the concealment of fraud. The increased costs of fraud associated with the presence of EOM open up political space for opposition parties and increase competitiveness. Moreover, the effects of monitoring should be more pronounced in non-democratic settings, where electoral quality, on average, is lower. EOM presence in autocracies

[38] High quality INGOs are the Carter Center, the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute, and the Asian Network for Free Elections.
[39] The p-value for autocracies is 0.103 and for democracies is 0.114.

on the one hand may restrict the extent of manipulation, while on the other hand could embolden opposition parties; both mechanisms should increase electoral competitiveness.

Our analysis provides evidence that monitored elections increase electoral competitiveness but only for dictatorships while it has little or no effect for democracies. More concretely, our findings show that margins of victory decrease significantly when monitoring occurs in authoritarian elections; in democracies, however, monitoring has no effect. Similarly, EOM are more likely to trigger political change in dictatorships than in democracies. Our analysis reveals that the presence of international monitors is positively associated with the likelihood of observing an electoral turnover in dictatorships.

Our paper makes several contributions; firstly, it links the presence of observation missions with improvements on electoral competitiveness, offering several mechanisms that can account for it. Secondly, it considers the importance of political regimes and how they can condition EOM effectiveness. The literature up to now had been silent on this, but as this paper has exhibited, whether a country is a democracy or a dictatorship has a significant impact on monitoring. It is in dictatorships that the presence of missions is most effective, partly reflecting the more frequent use of misconduct in those regimes. Thirdly, it reflects on rulers' decisions to invite missions and the impact that has theoretically, to our ability to understand the impact of missions, and empirically, to properly estimate their effect. Finally, it breaks down electoral competitiveness, distinguishing analytically between margins of victory and alternations of power. While our findings show that effects are quite similar, the two concepts are distinct and quite plausibly improvements in the former may not be reflected by increases in the latter.

Our findings have important policy implications as they indicate some conditions under which EOM may be more effective in practice. Both IGOs and INGOs working on promoting

democracy by enhancing the quality of elections should consider focusing mostly on autocratic regimes. Our analysis suggests that the deterrence of electoral fraud normally associated with deploying international observers is more likely to materialize under these particular electoral conditions.

Beyond our findings about the effects monitoring has on the competitiveness of elections, it remains unclear what the exact mechanisms at work are. While we hypothesize that some of these outcomes may be due to the restrictions imposed to the extent and tactics of manipulation used, our research design and data do not allow us to unearth the exact ways in which EOM affect the electoral environment. While the use of field experiments has provided some insights into how this may occur (Hyde 2007, 2010; Ichino and Schündeln 2012) there are still several open questions. We need to comprehend how the displacement of manipulation or alternative tools of misconduct employed by incumbents condition electoral competition. We also need to develop a better understanding about which manipulation tactics are more potent. Moreover, a thorough analysis of when and why incumbents invite missions is necessary to better understand the decision-making process behind that choice. Finally, we should investigate whether manipulation leaves a long term imprint on electoral competition, as recent work suggests (Simpser 2013).

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Appendix

Table A1 – Summary of descriptive statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
EOM	580	0.60	0.49	0	1
Constraints	580	0.41	0.41	0	1
Vote Margin	549	15.56	31.22	-53.7	99.14
Opposition Victory	578	0.35	0.48	0	1
Opposition support	558	29.75	14.55	0	96.1
Democracy	580	0.58	0.49	0	1
First election	580	0.10	0.30	0	1
Election type	580	0.45	0.50	0	1
GDP cap (log)	560	7.17	1.17	4.55	9.62
Post 1989	580	0.81	0.40	0	1

Table A2 – OLS detailed results

VARIABLES	(1) Pooled Vote Margin	(2) Democracy Vote Margin	(3) Autocracy Vote Margin	(4) Pooled Opposition Victory	(5) Democracy Opposition Victory	(6) Autocracy Opposition Victory
EOM	-20.12***	-3.66	-22.11***	0.14**	0.15*	0.13*
	(5.850)	(3.598)	(6.536)	(0.065)	(0.077)	(0.075)
Democracy	-24.38***			0.30***		
	(7.877)			(0.103)		
Interaction	17.83**			-0.02		
	(7.452)			(0.090)		
First Election	-2.73	0.87	-4.24	0.29**	0.26	0.24
	(6.441)	(6.355)	(8.073)	(0.120)	(0.212)	(0.189)
Election Type	-6.25	-2.50	-13.05	0.09	0.10	-0.04
	(4.938)	(4.045)	(13.881)	(0.112)	(0.122)	(0.169)
GDP capita (log)	8.73	5.27	7.56	-0.17*	-0.24	-0.07
	(6.143)	(8.299)	(10.819)	(0.101)	(0.158)	(0.162)
Margin of victory (lag)	-0.08	-0.21***	0.01	0.00**	0.00**	0.00
	(0.059)	(0.066)	(0.104)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)
Constant	-23.90	-33.45	3.00	1.29*	2.19*	0.53
	(44.244)	(63.798)	(72.019)	(0.714)	(1.205)	(1.063)
Observations	412	262	150	425	270	155
R-squared	0.080	0.057	0.181	0.067	0.067	0.086
# Countries	104	69	58	105	70	59
FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A3 – 2SLS analysis using Vote Margin as dependent variable

VARIABLES	(1) Pooled	(2) Autocracies	(3) Democracies	(4) Pooled	(5) Autocracies	(6) Democracies
EOM	-61.98***	-63.05***	-1.581	-65.46***	-67.08***	-2.989
	(15.643)	(14.542)	(12.00)	(14.691)	(14.456)	(28.30)
Democracy	-55.83***			-52.77**		
	(17.685)			(22.292)		
Interaction	60.01***			55.22**		
	(19.856)			(27.636)		
First election	2.44	5.38	3.235	2.56	6.24	3.543
	(7.917)	(9.271)	(5.373)	(7.753)	(9.023)	(7.276)
Election type	-8.19	-19.84*	-2.458	-7.40	-20.49*	-2.201
	(5.177)	(11.533)	(4.664)	(5.539)	(11.274)	(6.040)
GDP cap (log)	14.49**	12.23	9.416	14.21*	12.47	9.314
	(6.850)	(12.085)	(7.493)	(7.369)	(12.464)	(8.469)
Margin of victory (lag)	-0.11*	-0.07	-0.220***	-0.12*	-0.08	-0.220***
	(0.060)	(0.106)	(0.0667)	(0.063)	(0.115)	(0.0675)
Constant	-7.40	4.54	-4.731	-3.32	6.41	-2.719
	(42.947)	(75.230)	(47.06)	(44.421)	(76.705)	(70.72)
Observations	412	150	262	412	150	262
R-squared	0.606	0.654	0.438	0.590	0.627	0.439
Instrument	Post 1989	Post 1989	Post 1989	EOM 2Y	EOM 2Y	EOM 2Y
FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A4 – 2SLS coefficients using Opposition Victory as dependent variable

VARIABLES	(1) Pooled	(2) Autocracies	(3) Democracies	(4) Pooled	(5) Autocracies	(6) Democracies
EOM	0.60***	0.54***	0.31	0.54**	0.56***	-0.269
	(0.177)	(0.185)	(0.303)	(0.223)	(0.187)	(0.773)
Democracy	0.58***			0.81*		
	(0.225)			(0.460)		
Interaction	-0.39			-0.73		
	(0.284)			(0.623)		
First election	0.23	0.10	0.12	0.24*	0.10	0.291
	(0.138)	(0.207)	(0.283)	(0.144)	(0.208)	(0.342)
Election type	0.09	0.00	0.07	0.14	0.00	0.176
	(0.112)	(0.148)	(0.134)	(0.133)	(0.145)	(0.183)
GDP cap (log)	-0.22**	-0.09	-0.27*	-0.25**	-0.09	-0.312
	(0.109)	(0.180)	(0.167)	(0.121)	(0.183)	(0.199)
Margin of victory (lag)	0.00**	0.00	0.00**	0.00**	0.00	0.00431**
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.00171)
Constant	0.79	0.04	1.51	0.98	0.03	2.309
	(0.646)	(1.052)	(0.936)	(0.716)	(1.042)	(1.536)
Observations	425	155	270	425	155	270
R-squared	0.364	0.410	0.319	0.340	0.402	0.258
Instrument	Post 1989	Post 1989	Post 1989	EOM 2Y	EOM 2Y	EOM 2Y
FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A5 – Robustness test II: Use of constraints as alternative explanation

VARIABLES	DV: Vote Margin Pooled	DV: Opposition Victory Pooled
Constraints	-27.45***	0.19
	(7.953)	(0.114)
Democracy	-23.46***	0.30***
	(6.901)	(0.097)
Interaction	28.59***	-0.04
	(8.661)	(0.135)
First election	-0.55	0.28**
	(6.600)	(0.124)
Election type	-6.14	0.08
	(4.553)	(0.110)
GDP cap (log)	10.84*	-0.20**
	(5.946)	(0.098)
Margin of victory (lag)	-0.08	0.00**
	(0.056)	(0.001)
Constant	-41.98	1.50**
	(42.637)	(0.695)
Observations	412	425
R-squared	0.085	0.066
Number of countries	104	105
FE	YES	YES

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1